

SURVEYING THE POSSIBILITIES

Challenge

The Public Land Survey System (PLSS) is the "dominant system of describing and dividing land west of the Eastern seaboard." It is a legal reference system that splits the country into gridded blocks, and is the original basis for deeds and property lines.

The corners of the gridded areas - known as PLSS corners - are identified by markers placed in the ground or posted on signs. Many County Surveyors have PLSS corner description cards (also called tie cards), which describe how to find the PLSS corner markers. Few of these markers have been tagged with the GPS coordinates that can be used for legal surveys. Efforts are underway, but the process will take years. In the meantime, surveyors need a simple, reliable way to access the information on the cards.

Action

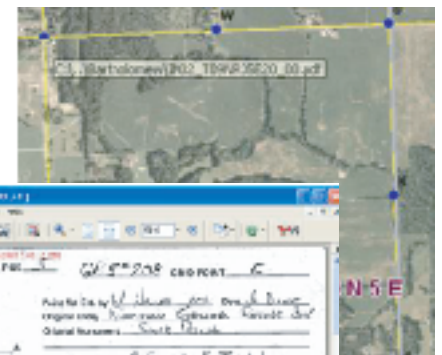
The statewide Tie Card Project, championed by the IGIC Geodetic Workgroup and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, has been underway since 2004. The goal is to scan tie cards and make them accessible in a digital, geographic format.

A grant program paid for laptops and scanners that can be checked out and used by County Surveyors to scan their tie cards. Donations of time and expertise from the private sector led to an application that renames scanned files based on a statewide naming convention. Each digital tie card is then linked to a point on a computer-generated grid which shows **approximate** corner marker locations. By clicking on a point, you can view that tie card.



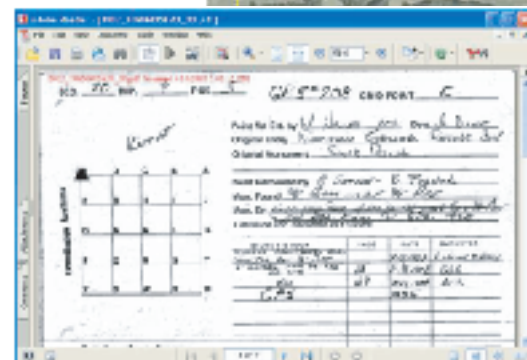
Small "monuments" mark the PLSS corners.

Plans are underway to partner with the Indiana Geological Survey to make this grid point layer - and digital copies of the tie cards - available on the GIS Atlas for Indiana website.



Results

- Tie cards are associated with a logical statewide grid point system, making them faster and easier to find
- Data is archived offsite, providing much-needed redundancy in case of fire, flood or other disaster
- The information will be accessible from any computer with an internet connection, any time



Surveyors can click on a blue grid point (top) and the tie card describing it pops up (bottom).